

Relative Clauses in Jambi Malay and Kerinci

Much has been said about the structure and usage of relative clauses in Standard and urban colloquial varieties of Malay/Indonesian (among others: Dardjowidjojo, 1967, Sneddon, 1996, & Tjung, 2006). This paper aims to describe relative clauses in ‘traditional’ Sumatran varieties of Malay, i.e. colloquial varieties spoken in the Malay heartland of Jambi Province, Sumatra, which are believed to be direct descendants of Proto-Malay. In this region there is wide variation in the morphemes which mark relative clauses: e.g. *nan/yan* (Tanjung Raden), *(di)ɲən* (Tanjung Pauh Kerinci), *na/(a)nu* (Rantau Panjang Malay).

This lexical variation raises the following question: do the syntactic properties of relative clauses themselves vary among these varieties, or is the variation limited to the form of the relative marker? The paper examines two varieties spoken in Jambi: Tanjung Raden (spoken in downstream Jambi (i.e. near Jambi City) and Tanjung Pauh Kerinci (spoken in upstream Jambi). The paper describes the properties of headed vs. headless relative clauses, relativization strategies and positions from which extraction is possible.